

Message Text

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ORIGIN ORM-02

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DRAFTED BY D/HA/ORM:JCHAVCHAVADZE:CML

APPROVED BY D/HA - JLCARLIN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION GENEVA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STATE 180504

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: SREF

SUBJECT: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES BOAT CASES

1. THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE WAS SENT TO THE BRITISH AMBAS-
SADOR IN WASHINGTON JULY 16, 1976.

2. QUOTE WE REQUEST THAT YOU SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING APPEAL
TO YOUR GOVERNMENT AS WELL AS TO THE AUTHORITIES IN HONG
KONG:

THE UNDERSIGNED VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN THE UNITED STATES
WITH LONGSTANDING HISTORY OF CONCERN FOR REFUGEES HAVE BEEN
WATCHING WITH DEEP DISTRESS AND DISBELIEF THE NEWS REPORTS
INDICATING THAT HONG KONG IS BARRING INDOCHINESE REFUGEES
WHO HAVE ESCAPED IN UNSEAWORTHY VESSELS FROM LANDING IN
THE CROWN COLONY. WHILE THIS POLICY DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE
LIMITED TO ASYLUM SEEKERS IN HONG KONG WE ARE ADDRESSING
THIS APPEAL TO YOU BECAUSE OF YOUR GOVERNMENT'S TRADITIONAL
CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND REFUGEE PROBLEMS THROUGHOUT
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THE WORLD. THE NEWSPAPER REPORTS USUALLY REFER TO REFUGEES

PICKED UP BY PASSING MERCHANTMEN WHILE THEIR SMALL CRAFT WERE IN GRAVE PERIL. THE INABILITY OF CARGO SHIPS TO LAND REFUGEES RESCUED IN OPEN SEA ALREADY HAS PRODUCED DISASTEROUS RESULTS. THE PRESS NOW REPORTS THAT CAPTAINS OF FREIGHTERS OFTEN IGNORE RAGTAG BOATS EVEN WHEN

THE REFUGEES ARE WAVING DESPERATELY. SINCE THERE IS NO PARALLEL TO THIS SITUATION IN OUR MEMORY WE CANNOT BELIEVE THE HONG KONG AUTHORITIES ARE IMPLEMENTING THE INSTRUCTIONS OF YOUR GOVERNMENT WHEN THEY REFUSE 99 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES PICKED UP BY THE BURMESE OWNED SS AVA. WE PLEAD WITH YOU TO CLARIFY THE POSITION OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND TO SET AN EXAMPLE FOR A POLICY OF FIRST ASYLUM FOR SHIPWRECKED REFUGEES.

.....AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR NATIONALITIES SERVICE
.....AMERICAN FUND FOR CZECHOSLOVAK REFUGEES
.....CHURCH WORLD SERVICE
.....HIAS
.....INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE
.....LUTHERAN IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE SERVICE
.....MIGRATION AND REFUGEE SERVICES
.....UNITED STATES CATHOLIC CONFERENCE
.....TOLSTOY FOUNDATION
.....TRAVELERS AID INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SERVICE. UNQUOTE.
KISSINGER

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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
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